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Taking the masses of the seven stars in this table, the masses of the 12 systems mentioned above as deduced from the spectroscopic parallaxes and the masses of *Sirius* (3.3⊙) and of *Alpha Centauri* (2.0⊙), which are the best determined stellar mass values we possess, we have a total of 21 systems, with masses ranging from 0.21⊙ to 7.21⊙, the mean value being 1.88⊙. Some of the individual mass values must still be regarded as quite uncertain, but the mean result may be taken as strong confirmatory evidence that, in the average, the visual binary systems, at least the short-period systems relatively near to us, are about twice as massive as our Sun.

The number of systems is hardly large enough to permit safe deductions as to possible correlations between mass and spectral class or between mass and absolute magnitude; but it is of interest to note that the five stars of classes K and M are, on the average, only half as massive as the 16 stars of classes A to G, and are, on the average, nearly four magnitudes (absolute) fainter.

R. G. AITKEN.

April, 1919.

AN INTERESTING VISUAL BINARY SYSTEM

In 1892, Hough found a 13th magnitude companion to the 6.7 magnitude star B. D. +26°, 1865 (R. A. $8^h49^m00^s$; Decl. +26° 36′; spectrum G0); in 1910, I discovered the bright star itself to be a close unequal pair (A 2131), and my measures of Hough's companion (Ho 357) showed a very decided increase in the distance with slow change in the angle in the interval of eighteen years.

I have just repeated the measures of these stars and give here my two sets of measures together with those of Hough for the wide pair.

Ho 357

1892.29	8°.2	31″.06	2n	18½-inch	Hough
1910.13	4 .2	38 .79	2n	36-inch	Aitken
1919.19	3 .2	42 .76	2n	36-inch	Aitken

A 2131 = Ho 357 AB

1910.15	254°.6	0″.32	3n	36-inch	Aitken
1918.00	298 .8	0 .30	1n	36-inch	Aitken
1919.19	299 .4	0 .32	2n	36-inch	Aitken

The three measures of Hough's companion fall quite precisely upon a line in position angle 169°.5 and indicate a proper motion of the bright star in that direction amounting to 0″.445 per year.

In *Cincinnati Publications* No. 18, the proper motion of this star is given as 0″.44 in 173°.1, and the agreement of the two results is satisfactory proof of the independence of the small star.

The measures of the close pair point to rapid orbital motion and a relatively short revolution period. Since Hough did not note the pair in 1892 when he discovered the distant companion it is probable that the angular distance then was smaller than it is now. The rapid orbital motion as well as the large proper motion makes it probable that the system is among the nearest stars and suggests that its parallax may be measurable by direct methods.

ROBERT G. AITKEN.

March, 1919.

THE DOMINION ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY

From an article in the *Daily Colonist*, Victoria, B. C., we learn that Mr. W. E. Harper, M. A., "has assumed his duties as astronomer and chief assistant to Dr. J. S. Plaskett," at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory. The article also states that Captain H. H. Plaskett has received an appointment as observer for the same observatory. Captain Plaskett is at present in England taking a postgraduate course at the Imperial College of Science, London. He has been overseas since April, 1917, having enlisted at Toronto in April, 1916, while attending the university. To quote further, "The activity of Dr. J. S. Plaskett and Dr. Young in the intervening time [since April 28, 1918] is evidenced by the fact that up to date thay have obtained no less than 1850 spectra. . . ."

THE NEW CHABOT OBSERVATORY

The Oakland City Board of Education has appropriated the money needed to complete the building for the new Chabot Observatory at Leona Heights. The dome for the new 20-inch telescope and a shelter for the transit instrument and the clocks were completed, and the instruments installed, early in 1916. The present appropriation will provide a dome for the 8-inch equatorial now at the old observatory, and a building, for offices, library and reception room, connecting the two domes. This will give the Oakland School Department the finest astronomical observatory possessed by any city in this country. Mr. Charles Burckhalter, the director of the observatory, in addition to his personal researches in astronomy, has led thousands of young people to take an interest in the